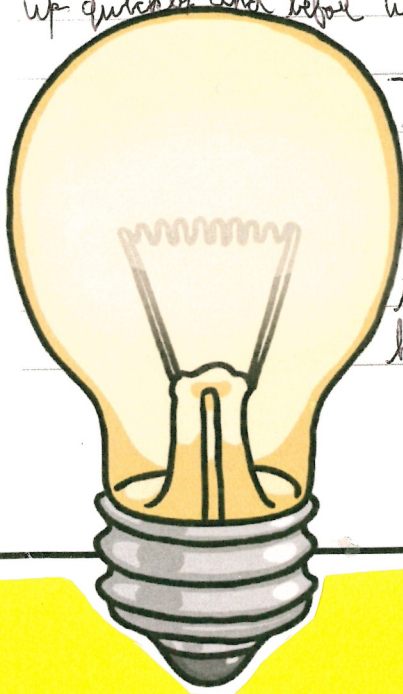


Getting in the light

It was the summer of 1958 when rural electrification first came to Elphin, Roscommon. It was an exhilarating time for the whole village and my family couldn't wait to get the new electricity in. We've heard rumour that it's supposed to be amazing, well from some people, the rest, well that's a different story. Some people thought that it ruined tradition and that it was not "actual light"⁶⁶ but I was pretty sure I was going to love it.

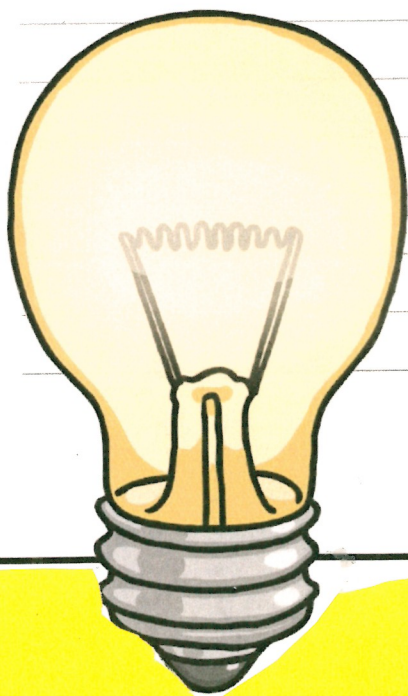
Before I knew it, it was Saturday, the day when the electricity came. The whole town (which was 113 people) filled into the local church to watch the first electric light turn on. We got to the church early so that we could get good seats. We watched the men from E.S.B. set everything up. The technology was so high tech that me and my brother were completely mind boggled. They used a ladder to get up to the ceiling and from there they spent 20-30 minutes wiring the lightbulb into the ceiling. By that time people were starting to pour in and seats started filling up quickly and before we knew it, the ceremony had begun.



It started off with the priest thanking everyone for coming and thanking the E.S.B. men for setting everything up and then we got straight down to business. They had installed a switch in the wall.

Toby

The priest asked for the youngest and oldest people. By this our family was very chuffed as my sister was only 1 month old and the youngest person in the town. As he and Moralya who was the eldest person walked up to the front. There was a calm yet cheerful clap from the rest sitting in the church. Then the moment came. The priest lit the candle and then held my sister. Moralya blew out the candle and there was a small clap then all was silent. I could hear my heart beating, for a moment the world stood still. I couldn't believe this was happening. After all these years of fire and candles. And then the priest gently pressed my sister's little hand to the switch and there was light. Not a dark orange light from the fire, not the dim cream light from a candle. No this was something else. It illuminated across the room filling every nook and cranny, spilling over tabletops, a glistening in the reflection of the windows. It brought joy to my eyes as it flooded the room because I knew that on this day my town had made history.



Toby